

## **Democrats' Health Care Reform is Latest Action to Hurt Kansas**

March 24, 2010

The news on the Kansas economy is not good. Our State's unemployment rate rose to 7.1 percent in January. In February, State revenues fell a whopping \$71 million more than expected. We need \$500 million to balance our budget in Kansas in 2010 and 2011. These million-dollar numbers don't mean much up here in Washington, where this Congress continues to rack up trillions in debt obligations as if there are no consequences and money magically appears out of thin air. However, the effects of this thoughtlessness are indeed terrible.

In Kansas, the overwhelming majority of our State budget is comprised of health care and education responsibilities. Many of these responsibilities have been handed down to the States from the Federal Government. Our education system is teetering on the breaking point, with schools facing closure or consolidation and with educators and staff being laid off.

Services for our State's developmentally disabled and support for our sick and elderly have been cut. Folks in Kansas are hurting. I see their pain when I return from Washington, D.C., every weekend home to Kansas.

In our State, we think differently than they do up here in Washington. We don't spend what we can't afford, we don't sacrifice long-term prosperity for short-term gratification, we don't sidestep our personal responsibility, and we don't tell other people how to live their lives. It pains me to reflection all of the bad ideas of this Congress: the stimulus packages, the bailouts, Cash for Clunkers, cap-and-trade, because I know these mistakes are digging us deeper and deeper into a hole. I was one of only 17 members out of 435 to oppose all of these measures, not because I want to obstruct legislation, but because our personal freedom and economic liberty are restricted each time we create obligations we can't pay for.

Kansas, like many States, is constitutionally prohibited from running in the red. When Congress irresponsibly shoulders States with mandates and expenses, it's the States and their taxpayers that suffer because they can't evade fiscal responsibilities like the Federal Government often does.

Last Sunday is the latest and most glaring example of this elitist, Washington-knows-best attitude. On Sunday night, this Congress passed the Obama-Pelosi health care plan along a narrow partisan line against my staunch opposition. This plan, which became law on Monday, is the wrong direction for America for a long, long list of reasons. With our national debt already at more than \$12 trillion, this new plan will drive us further in the hole. The total cost of this health care plan is more than \$1.33 trillion. While this estimate is staggering, it doesn't take into account the almost \$400 billion needed to fix the Medicare payments to physicians--payments that Kansas doctors must receive to avoid a 21-percent cut and keep their doors open.

Furthermore, this cost estimate doesn't account for the \$20 billion that States must expend to implement the Medicaid expansion contained in the health care plan. Kansans can't afford these billions of new costs, but they are required to carry out so-called reforms. Since Kansans

can't afford the requirements of this unfunded mandate, we may be forced to take deeper cuts out of our education system and close and consolidate more schools, dimming the light of opportunity for many Kansans.

Washington needs to open its eyes to this gathering storm. Kansans understand that we can't create an entirely new government entitlement program without exploding spending and increasing our national debt. Our history doesn't support the President's list of campaign-style, promise-the-world pledges. This bill will not only seriously injure our health care system, but its tax increases, mandates, and increased bureaucracy will ruin the Kansas economy and jobs.

I will continue the battle in Washington against this attitude that we know best. It threatens the future prosperity of our future State and Nation. On Monday, I introduced H.R. 4901, legislation to repeal the health care plan we just passed. Only with a total repeal of this budget-busting mistake can we then institute true reforms that will lower health care costs for families and businesses. My legislation will undo what has been done and replace it with something much more based upon common sense and the will of the American people. Only then can we have a health care system that is truly improved. We and other States demand this change for purposes of making sure that prosperity returns to our State.

And Madam Speaker, that's just the way it should be.